

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

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October 27, 1969

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: U.S.-India Bilateral Talks

Southeast Asia was the principal focus of bilateral talks which Under Secretary Richardson and State Department officials had on October 16-17 with an Indian delegation led by Foreign Secretary T. N. Kaul.

I saw Kaul before the talks began and told him rather bluntly that Indian recognition of Hanoi would have the most severe effect on U.S.-India relations and would cause a strongly unfavorable reaction within the Executive Branch, on the Hill and among the American people. Kaul saw Congressmen Broomfield, Murphy and others on the Hill, who reinforced my statement regarding how seriously the Congress would react.

During the bilateral talks Elliot Richardson, Joe Sisco and Marshall Green supported our position, basing our arguments on detailed analyses of the situation in Southeast Asia. In private conversations, members of the U.S. delegation repeated to the Indians the very harmful effect Indian recognition would have on U.S. relations with the Government of India.

Several times during the talks Foreign Secretary Kaul stated that India did not wish to do anything which would damage the U.S. interest or embarrass the U.S., but that the decision regarding recognition of Hanoi was one for India to make. It is hazardous to guess what this means regarding Indian policy because (1) I am not sure just what strategy Kaul is pursuing and (2) I do not know what his influence with Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh and Mrs. Gandhi is. At any rate, Kaul seemed to imply that India would not recognize Hanoi now.

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We explored with the Indians the possible security and economic shape of Southeast Asia after the war. The Indians were looking for specifics: our reaction to Mrs. Gandhi's "Eastern Locarno" neutralization proposal and to the Indian proposal for use of the ECAFE Council of Ministers to coordinate Asian economic cooperation. We pointed out to the Indians that there were still too many variables regarding a Vietnam settlement for us to project a plan for the future. We did, however, discuss possible alternatives with them.

Our discussion of China revealed that the Indians see even less prospect for a softening of the Chinese attitude toward the outside world than we do, although they thought that Chinese respect for power might cause them to expand communications with the USSR and possibly the US.

The Indians repeated their usual recitation about their relations with Pakistan. We strongly urged that they find some way to work out the issue of diversion of the Ganges water supply. On political issues we repeated our general position that improved India-Pakistan relations are important for the security and development of South Asia, but we indicated that we contemplated no third party role concerning these issues.

On the economic side the Indians expressed concerns regarding our trade and aid policies. We made realistic presentations which they probably found pessimistic.

The Under Secretary accepted the Indian invitation for another round of talks next year in New Delhi.



William P. Rogers

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